

October 30, 2009

Weekly Update: H1N1 – A New Kind of Flu – What You Need to Know!

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H1N1 Vaccine Availability

The Riley County-Manhattan Health Department will hold its next H1N1 flu vaccination clinics on **Tuesday, November 3rd from 4:00 – 5:30 and Wednesday, November 5th from 5:00 – 7:00 PM, subject to vaccine availability.** We will have several different types of H1N1 vaccine available for specific populations; nurses will assign dosage types. We will serve all those in line by clinic closing time, unless we run out of vaccine. The health department only has H1N1 vaccinations available during these special clinic times.

Notable Changes:

The eligibility guidelines for these clinics have changed to include new populations according to the National Center for Disease Control's (CDC) broader categories of high risk populations.

We will have approximately 1000 doses to offer to the following population groups (in no particular order):

- 1) Pregnant women
- 2) Persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years
- 3) Persons between the ages of 25 and 64 years who have chronic medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications
- 4) Health care and emergency medical services personnel
- 5) Caregivers for, and people who live with, infants under 6 months of age

Other populations, such as police, teachers, and the elderly are not yet covered as eligible populations. Chronic medical conditions that may place persons ages 25-64 at increased risk for flu complications include (but are not limited to) asthma, heart disease (not high blood pressure), diabetes, kidney and liver disorders, epilepsy, cerebral palsy or immunosuppression.

The vaccination process will be much quicker for you, if you arrive with completed paperwork.

Each person should have a consent form, a HIPAA form, and (if you have insurance) a health insurance form. These forms can be downloaded from this website. Also please bring a copy of your insurance card (front and back) with you. This is necessary even if we have your insurance information on file because H1N1 data is entered into a separate computer system. H1N1 vaccine is free. Fees for administration of the vaccine will be billed to insurance. Only insurance will be billed, not individuals.

We will be receiving ongoing shipments of vaccine and will continue to offer clinics several times each week as supply allows. Some private providers will have some supply as well for their high risk patients. Sometimes a clinic may deplete the supply, but we anticipate ongoing shipments. Additionally, we will be working with Lafene Student Health Center, Fort Riley, and local school districts for future clinics. Watch www.rileycountyks.gov for changes in vaccine availability or call 776-4779 extension 297.

Protect Your Family

The H1N1 vaccine has an excellent safety profile. It has been extensively tested and it cannot give you the flu. It is important to remember that the science of flu vaccine is safe and well established. What is different this year is this particular virus, which has shown the capability to attack a younger age group and sometimes cause serious complications. The H1N1 vaccine is your best defense against this flu. We recommend that people get vaccinated as soon as it becomes available for their population or age group, even if they have already been sick.

Simple healthy habits will also help protect you, such as hand washing, covering your cough, and staying home when you are sick. Please remember that most otherwise healthy people who contract the flu do not need to go to the doctor or emergency room. Staying hydrated and getting plenty of rest can save a trip to the emergency room and save resources for those who are severely ill.